DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 298 035 SO 019 237

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TITLE Marietta Celebration of Unity Case Study.
PUB DATE [88]
NOTE 23p.; Some portions of the document may not reproduce clearly.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; *Citizen Participation; Community; *Community Action; Community Attitudes; *Demonstrations (Civil); *Group Unity; Instructional Materials; *Local Issues; Racial Attitudes; Social Studies
IDENTIFIERS *Ku Klux Klan; *Ohio (Marietta); Ohio (Washington County)

ABSTRACT

This case study concerns the forming of a Marietta, Ohio unity committee, entitled Citizens for Social and Racial Justice, in response to the local Ku Klux Klan's (KKK) request for a parade permit in order to demonstrate against blacks in this city. Marietta, the county seat of Washington County, Ohio, has a population composed of both white and black citizens. The committee's objectives included: (1) celebrating unity as a community of people; (2) demonstrating opposition to the KKK's objectives and presenting alternative goals; (3) educating children through positive examples; and (4) demonstrating in a peaceful and nonviolent manner. The case study describes the planning of a proposed unity walk and rally to coincide with the KKK demonstration, tensions and conflicts between unity committee members and city officials, security procedures, and post-unity celebration activities. The document provides: (1) the unity celebration schedule of events; (2) guidelines for appropriate demonstration behavior; (3) selected newspaper articles; and (4) demonstration route maps. Appendices include: (1) a 1923 article from the KKK newspaper, "The Klan-Kraft"; (2) a copy of a cryptic hate-letter; and (3) a newspaper article by Geraldine Parker, entitled "Sheltered Slaves Escaping from South 'Underground Railroad' Ran through Washington County." (JHP)

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Marietta Celebration of Unity Case Study

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Marietta Celebration of Unity Case Study

Washington County, Ohio is a predominatly rural area of farms and factories, separated from West Virginia by the Ohio River. Its population is predominantly white, though it does have a black minority, many of whom are descended from runaway slave families. Marietta, the county seat, was a station on the Underground Railroad during the mid-1800's, but the town's proximity to a slaveholding state ensured the presence of many Southern sympathizers; by the 1920's, the town had an active Ku Klux Klan chapter with an office on Main Street and its own newspaper, Klan-Kraft (a page from Klan-Kraft is included in the Appendix). Area residents remember cross-burnings and other isolated incidents of Klan activity continuing well into the 1950's, but relations between the races appear to have been calm since that time. Washington County today seems an unlikely place for Klan activity.

Ku Klux Klan seeks Marietta parade permit

The Ku Klux Klan is seeking a permit to parade on Marietta sidewalks next month.

The request came from Terry L. Boyce, who said he is the "Grand Dragon of North Carolina" for the white supremist group. Mayor Nancy Hollister said the Aug. 29 form letter requested a parade permit for 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24.

Boyce's wife, Becky, said Fri. afternoon that Boyce also wrote to the Washington County commissioners requesting the use of the courthouse steps for a speech, and to the City of Belpre, requesting a parade permit. Neither has responded, she said.

Hollister said the city told Boyce in a letter it does not issue permits for sidewalk parades.

"No permission has been given, nor has it been refused at his time," the mayor said. "There is the right of assembly and there is freedom of speech.

"But we do not allow any solicitations in the streets," she continued. "We do not allow any gathering on the sidewalk that would block pedestrian traffic or the placement of barricades on the sidewalks."

Hollister said she hopes area residents will ignore the parade, if it takes place.

"I find the whole thing repugnant, but we will follow any legal requirements. I consider this a non-event,

and I would hope the people of this community would respond and give them a very unwelcome welcome by ignoring them."

The Klan request said the group plans a peaceful march. Mrs. Boyce said her husband and a few others would hand out literature and seek new members.

"It's just a march," she said. "They carry two flags--the American flag and the confederate flag. Usually they have a speech."

County commissioners may respond to the request next week.

"If they want to use the courthouse steps, they can just go ahead and use them. They don't have to have a permit," commissioner Dick Young said. "We won't really be giving them permission or denying them either way."

A Belpre spokesperson was not available for comment.

Hollister said she is checking if other cities have received similar letters. She said she never has heard of any type of Klan activity in this area.

Weekender, September 12 and 13, 1987. Marietta Times

That Sunday, members of the social concerns committee of the local Unitarian Universalist church discussed the announcement and the city's request and concluded that they needed to respond to the Klan in some way other than ignoring its activities. The committee's initial idea was to hold a memorial service for James Reeb, the Unitarian minister killed in Alabama during the civil rights movement, and to invite the public. Talking with other members of the community, however, convinced them that a broader response was necessary, and on October 4, the now slightly-larger group, calling itself Citizens for Social and Racial Justice, held a public meeting which drew more than 90 people. This larger group chose the name Celebration of Unity, set up a steering committee, expressed a wish to hold a march and rally, and set for itself four objectives:

to celebrate our unity as people living together in a community;

to demonstrate our opposition to the aims of the Klan and present an alternative to its goals;

to educate our children and set a good example;

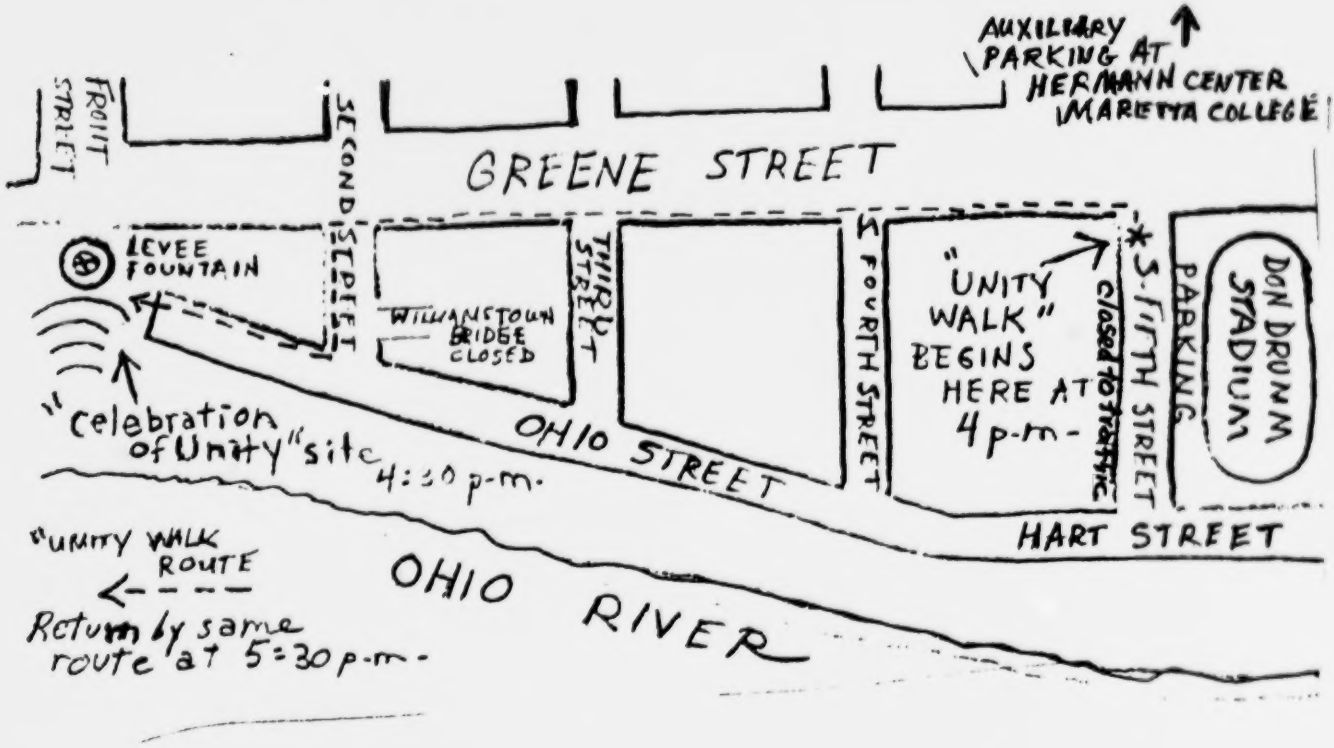
to demonstrate in a peaceful and nonviolent way.

People from Belpre, Ohio and nearby Parkersburg, West Virginia also

attended. Members of both groups decided that, while a joint planning of responses was probably not possible, they would use the same name and support each other's events, loosely coordinating publicity and security. From this point on, this case study will focus solely on the Marietta event.

Later that week, some members of the steering committee met with city officials to discuss the choice of a site for the Unity Walk and rally. The officials discouraged the idea in general and were strongly opposed to the Unity committee's first choice, a public park past which the Klan would march. The steering committee chose an alternate site a block away from the Klan's march, again hoping to rally on public property.

"proposed route"



Mayor Hollister agreed to attend the next steering committee meeting on October 11, but felt "set up" when she arrived and found a television reporter

covering the meeting. The reporter had not been invited and did not film the planning meeting, but the mayor was not aware of this at the time. This occurrence added to the tension already existing between some of the Unity committee members and city officials. At this time, problems developed with the alternate site chosen by the committee, which was informed that a city ordinance required all groups using city parks for events of more than 200 people to provide toilet facilities, trained security, and a traffic control plan. The Unity committee was unable to meet the requirements.

On October 15, the security committee (a subgroup of the steering committee) met to finalize its plans. This committee was concerned over the city's insistence that use of public property would activate the ordinance and voted to accept Marietta College's offer of a rally site and security assistance. Faced with time pressure, after the meeting two members of the security committee contacted the rest of the steering committee by phone and obtained approval for the site change. That Saturday, select members of the steering committee met with the college's dean of students and chief of campus security to coordinate the security plans, since part of the event would take place off-campus.

Questions had been raised concerning the planning committee leadership and the conflicts that had arisen from personality and style differences; the hurried planning of this security meeting, the fact that not all steering committee members were present, and the invitation of someone not previously involved to mc the rally caused the departure of one member of the original organizing team. The remaining members met with city officials, resolved most differences with the city, and on October 18 held a third public meeting to announce final plans for the event, give some training in nonviolence, and

recruit additional marshalls for the Celebration of Unity (see program for the event).

That week, two Justice Department officials met with local law enforcement and politicians, as well as the Unity committee, and announced that they would be present at the event. Sheriff's deputies from neighboring counties were put on standby alert.

Unity committee members had been receiving calls from out of town groups wishing to participate in or show support for the events. The participation of some of these groups renewed tension, as Marietta officials distrusted the presence of so many "outsiders," while the leaders of some of the incoming groups felt restricted by the Celebration of Unity's structure. At the same time, rumors were circulating regarding an incursion by Socialist Workers' Party members and black militants. The Socialist Workers' contingent proved to be two teenagers with leaflets; no black militants materialized.

The Celebration of Unity on October 24 drew around 600 people for the Unity Walk. City police and campus security provided protection, and there were no incidents at the Celebration itself (see newspaper article inserts).

Despite their qualms over the event, city officials expressed to Unity committee members their appreciation for a peaceful event that kept many people away from downtown and helped take some of the pressure off the police.

The night after the Celebration, eight members of the steering committee met and agreed on the need for ongoing work to combat racism and sexism. They renamed themselves the Unity Coalition and began a process of goal-setting which would ultimately utilize the Quaker Clearness Manual. In the interim, they agreed to hold more public educational events as part of their outreach. They also established a good working relationship with the new editor of the local newspaper.

A CELEBRATION OF UNITY

3:00 - 6:00 PM October 24, 1987
MARIETTA COLLEGE FIFTH STREET MALL

OBJECTIVES

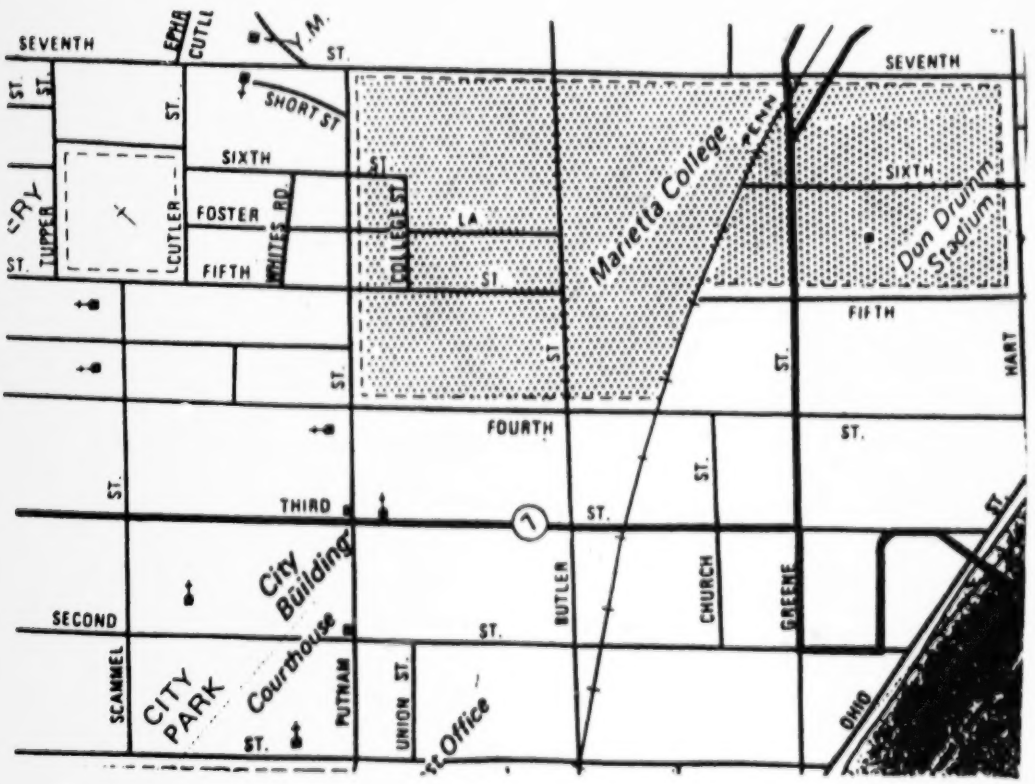
To celebrate our unity as a people living in community.
To present an alternative to the message of the Klan.
To educate our children and to set a good example.
To protest and demonstrate in a peaceful nonviolent way.
To demonstrate our opposition to the aims of the Klan.
To support the victims of Klan hatred.

SCHEDULE

3:00 PM Unity service First Baptist Church.
3:30 PM Gather at the COLLEGE GREEN for the UNITY WALK
-get a "UNITY" balloon
-get in line for the Unity Walk
-follow the directions of the marshalls they will be wearing GREEN ARM BANDS
-signs should be positive and have no sticks
4:00 PM Unity Walk
-proceed out the College Gate down PUTNAM ST.
-The group will walk 1 block to THIRD ST., where we will turn left.
-proceed down THIRD ST. as far as BUTLER ST. Here we will turn LEFT again, back towards MARIETTA COLLEGE.
-We then will walk 2 blocks to the FIFTH STREET MALL, on the campus.
4:30 PM Arrive at the COLLEGE MALL
- Welcome:JIM BAILEY, MC student Vice President
- Song MIKE MULLEN (master of ceremonies)
- REV. DON SCHULER
- REV. TOM SAGENDORF
- A MARIETTA COLLEGE STUDENT
- REV. LARRY MILLER
- MR. MICHEAL GELLER
- REV. ED KAKASCIK
- MS. VIOLA HUFF
- DR. SHERRIL CLELAND, Pres. of Marietta College
- Balloon release
- Song MIKE MULLEN
- Benediction : JUSTIN LAPOINT
5:30 PM Adjourn PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR CARS AND LEAVE THE DOWNTOWN AREA. FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS OF THE MARSHALLS. WE WANT THIS CELEBRATION TO BE PEACEFUL AND WELL COORDINATED

GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOR

1. STAY ON THE SIDEWALK AT ALL TIMES.
2. YIELD TO ONCOMING PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC.
3. WALK TWO ABREAST AND DO NOT BLOCK THE SIDEWALK.
4. SIGNS SHOULD HAVE NO STICKS AND BE ONLY FOUR FEET WIDE, BANNERS SHOULD BE ONLY SEVEN FEET LONG.
5. DON'T RESPOND TO HECKLING.
6. SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM PEOPLE WITH GREEN ARMBANDS.
7. DO NOT CARRY CANS OR BOTTLES IN LINE.
8. PLEASE DO NOT LITTER. LEAVE MARIETTA CLEAN!



Rallies draw protest in Marietta, Belpre

By SEAN FLYNN
Times Staff Writer

NEAR COOLVILLE — "This is *America*," Terry Boyce growled out into the Athens County darkness. "This is the country we fought and died for. And we're puttin' up with a lot of *crap* we didn't ask for."

A big man with a big Southern voice, Boyce was halfway through his tirade on "America," that place he said is being lost to the commies, the faggots, the blacks.

Three hours earlier, surrounded by a thousand cursing, spitting protestors, he kept his shouted-down speech on mainstream topics: drugs, abortion, the liberal government. Back then, in downtown Marietta, he was a political activist trying to woo the downtrodden to his side.

But out here in the forest, where the main road was five miles back and the oily stink of kerosene dripped from the air, he was the North Carolina Grand Dragon of the Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, waiting to burn a cross.

"The South is rising again," he shouted at 14 robed followers and a handful of greasy bikers. "The Klan is rising again. And we're going to take all the good white people with us and leave all the trash behind.

"If it takes it, we'll go to war...and we'll die for it."

The gathered faithful whooped and yelled.

Ten minutes later, someone torched the cross, and the Klansmen paraded around it, stopping every few steps to chant "God, Country, Klan" and bow toward the flames. "Christ is the light of the world," it says in the official Klan creed. "By this sign we conquer."

A cold October wind blew hard through the drizzle and the dirty orange flames. It was chilly in the firelight.

■■■■

By 6 o'clock Saturday night, Marietta Mayor Nancy Hollister said there was "a big sigh of relief" from Marietta to Belpre. Two dozen robed Klansmen and more than a thousand protestors had come and gone at both cities, and no one was arrested or injured.

For a half-hour, Boyce led his troops up and down Belpre's Washington Boulevard, blasting the first 11 notes of "Dixie" on his electronic bullhorn and chanting "White Power in America." On each side of the street, protestors lined up eight deep; hundreds more swept after the Klan parade, waving anti-Klan signs and swapping cheap taunts: "Were'd they get a robe big enough for you, fat man?" "Look at them sores on your face, boy — looks like you got AIDS."

At Marietta, the crowd seemed bigger and pushed closer and the taunts turned to spit before the Klansmen finally drove out of the Parking Partners lot on Second Street. The mob, peppered with Socialists and other radical left-wing groups, smothered the Klansmen with the same hate they came to denounce.

"We did offer an alternative," said Meg Philbin, part of the steering committee for the Unity event that never got closer than a block to the Klansmen at Marietta. "But we didn't convince everyone."

More than 600 people marched with the Unity group around the Marietta College campus. But by the time the parade ended for a rally at the Fifth Street Mall, the crowd had dwindled to only 300; the rest had joined the throng downtown.

But while Unity organizers said they were disappointed, a veteran of two other Klan protests said he felt the rest of the Unity marchers belonged on Putnam Street to defuse the situation there.

"Everyone schooled in non-violence was up on (campus) letting everyone know it's OK to be non-violent," said Athens City Councilman Steve Kropf, who brought a group of 50 Athens residents and Ohio University students to the Unity celebration. "The speakers were speaking, the singers were singing and everyone was feeling good. But down on the other side ... we were needed to help keep order.

"I don't want people to think I'm belittling what (the Unity organizers) did, but I think there's room for more of a confrontation. I think you can be confrontational and non-violent."

At the same time Kropf was with the Unity group on the Mall, Jothiratnam, an OU doctoral student from Malaysia, was telling Klan "security officer" Jerry Lambert that he had a right to climb the courthouse steps.

"You got the right to get whupped, too, boy," Lambert said.

■■■■

"The way I see it, the only hate in this group is we hate the way things are going in America," Boyce said two nights before the rallies. "What we want is equal rights for the white man. We feel the way we need to do it is get out on the streets, get recognized and get our rights back through the courts."

But the courts in recent years have been less than sympathetic to the Klan and its assorted factions. In February, an all-white jury in Mobile, Ala., ordered the United Klans of America to pay $7 million to the mother of a young black man hanged from a tree after his throat was slit by Klansmen in 1981.

According to the Associated Press, that and other legal actions brought by the federal government or other legal agencies have dropped Klan membership and influence to their lowest point in decades.

As for the push into the Marietta area, Boyce — a former Washington County resident — said the low minority population here makes this prime for recruiting. He said later that 2,500 Klan applications were handed out during the marches to local people eager to join.

But in the darkness west of Belpre Saturday night, only 35 people turned out for the cross-burning. Not counting the five photographers and two reporters, Boyce had picked up a half-dozen followers at best.

Still, he told the tiny gathering that the day's events had been a success, and he thanked the "good, white Americans" for "standing up" to the horde of anti-Klan demonstrators.

"There's a Klansman in everybody," he told them. "You just have to wake him up."

Eight hours before Boyce said that, Jeff Campbell sat on his front porch next to Civitan Park where the Klan rallied, looking over at the mass of Confederate flags the Klansmen carried.

"Well," he said, "There's the American Dream and there's the American Nightmare.

"This is part of the nightmare."

***Times* staff writer Janelle Lawrence contributed to this article.**

The Marietta Times Oct. 26, p. 9.

600 react on campus

By BRIAN ROTHENBERG

Six hundred people marched on campus in a display of unity Saturday.

The rally, a response to the appearance of a group of Ku Klux Klansmen downtown, progressed as planners had hoped with no apparant violence.

MC prepared for the worst by implementing five times the normal amount of security personnel on duty. Security personnel could be seen hovering above Dawes Memorial Library and in the Erwin Hall bell tower filming the events.

The rally began forming as scheduled on the front campus green at 3:30 p.m. A guitar duo performed folksongs as people milled around. Organizers then got the massive group lined up in pairs and at 4 p.m they began marching on Putnam Street across Fourth Street to Third Street where they proceeded south to Butler Street and wound up back on campus at the College's pedestrian mall.

The group walked quietly, many holding posters promoting racial and religious unity. At the front of the group was a banner that had a large heart emblazened in the middle of a contour of the United States. Above the contour were the words, "We Walk United."

The closest the group came to the sight of the Klan rally was at the corner of Putnam and Third Street, one block across the street of the Washington County Courthouse. The Klan had not arrived as marchers turned down Third St. but numerous people appeared to be waiting for the Klan to arrive (see related story).

The group concluded its march at 4:30 p.m. arriving at Dawes Memorial Library where a series of speeches were given (see related story).

Dean of Students Stephen Markwood said the increased security was necessary in order to protect anybody who was on College property at the time and to protect the property.

As a result buildings were locked, streets on campus were blocked and the events were videotaped and photographed.

Markwood said he was not concerned that the unity group or Klansmen would cause trouble. But, he said that a third party could have created a situation that might have gotten out of hand.

Not all of the people in the crowd were MC students or Marietta residents. Nykiah Wright, a sophomore at Ohio University, said at the rally that she had come to Marietta with a group of people.

"I thought it was a good cause. It gives us all an opportunity to unite with the Lord," Wright said. She added that she had heard about the rally from an organization called, "Fusion," that had been formed on the OU campus earlier this month to unite student efforts to participate in Saturday's events.

Guests speak at rally

By LAURIE PELL

A number of clergyman and MC leaders delivered short speeches Saturday, decrying the white supremist beliefs of the Ku Klux Klan.

The speakers were part of the "Celebration of Unity" rally that began with a walk protesting the appearance of the Ku Klux Klan in Marietta. The rally ended on the steps of Dawes Memorial Library (see related story).

Ten speakers including senior Jim Bailey, MC student body executive board vice-president; senior Jay Lamba, an MC student; and MC President Sherrill Cleland gathered to deliver short speeches on unity, equality and promoting good feelings toward all people.

Bailey started the program by welcoming everyone to the celebration. "Everyone has the right to exercise their freedom of speech," he said.

Local radio host, Mike Mullen, followed with his opening remarks as master of ceremonies. Mullen, responding to the turnout for the march, said, "The democratic system is working well in Marietta, Ohio."

The Rev. Don Schuler, pastor at the First Baptist Church in Marietta, talked about celebrating our oneness as a human family. He also stated that ignoring the Klan is not the answer. "To say or do nothing is the wrong message." He ended by saying we do not condone hatred and prejudices, and that everyone at the march was sending out the right message.

Schuler was followed by the Rev. Tom Sagendorf of the Christ United Methodist Church in Marietta who talked about diversity among people and how this gives our world its true beauty.

Then Lamba, who served on the unity rally's organizing committee, talked about the way people do not outwardly express racism, but instead reserve their comments for their family. Lamba called this a "double standard" and said it must end.

Lamba ended his speech by suggesting Americans pursue a new lesson plan. He said, "The unity that we must take home, to our neighbors and all people, is to spread love and compassion."

Michael Geller, a representative from the Anti-Defamation League said the Klu Klux Klan was only interested in the media attention they could receive from its rally. He also said that the ADL has been working since 1913 to give the truth about groups like the KKK, and they have been educating people on how to defend themselves against them.

The Rev. Ed Kakascik said in his speech, "We can be peace loving people and we can proclaim what we believe in."

Viola Huff, president of the local NAACP, shared the same ideas. In her speech, she said, "We must spread love, peace and hope when we come together as a human race."

Cleland said, "This day is a special reminder of our rededication to our true values." The president then led the crowd in the release of balloons, which had the slogan "Celebrate Unity" printed on them.

The program ended with a song and the benediction.

The Marcolian Friday, October 30, p. 1.

In January, a Coalition member received a coded letter from a group calling itself "Sindrome '88" (see Appendix II) Initially panicked, the Coalition member went to the police and received a supportive response. The department began a file on hate group activity in Marietta, which fortunately has had no additions.

Appendix I

Klan-Kraft, October 1923

AMERICAN UNITY LEAGUE

Starts Advertising Campaign in
Marietta Times

Derrick Editorial Baseless Lie From
Beginning to End

Through the medium of the Marietta Times, which has the reputation of publishing just such invidious junk, the American Unity League reproduces, as an advertisement in the issue of Sunday, Oct. 7th, an item entitled "The Fiery Cross" -- Editorial from Oil City Derrick, which is without doubt the most pusilanimous aggregation of exaggerated lies and false accusations that has ever been placed before intelligent people to read in this civilized section of the country.

The enlightened people to whom it has been demonstrated what the Ku Klux Klan is and that they live up to those principles in practice, resent the false attack of ignorant bigots who seek to undermine the faith of American citizens in an organization whose prime purpose it is to emulate character and instill a staunch patriotism in the hearts of its members toward our glorious country.

The editorial says, in part, "It makes righteous blood curdle to read the Oklahoma testimony." And we might say here that it makes an American's blood boil to read the damnable assumptions and accusations contained in that editorial.

The Derrick Editor has wisely avoided, however, making the direct statement that the Klan is responsible for the outrages in Oklahoma. He knows, as a great many of us know, that the bottom is going to fall out of that rotten piece of ridiculous propaganda ere long and that it may be yet proven that the opponents of the Klan in that state, themselves, have perpetrated these dastardly deeds in an attempt to discredit the Klan.

The American Unity League, by making capital of every act committed against the laws of our country in seeking to attach the blame therefore upon the Klan, is only augmenting the membership in the Klan, because of the fact that the American people have learned the truth. The American Unity League, entirely opposite from what its name suggests, is only breeding hatred, intolerance and bigotry. It is stirring up strife and by its acts of violence in attempting to break up the peaceful assembly of citizens has caused bloodshed and suffering to thousands of good citizens who were not in any way antagonistic toward the forces that go to make up that organization.

There has been no spirit of revenge in the Klan. There has been no spirit of intolerance. It has no quarrel for any man or group of men because of his or their religious belief. The Unity League and like organizations have forced the issue and hope by a continuance of their nefarious campaign to develop a spirit of revence in the Klan that will incite them to lawlessness in order to protect them-

selves.

But this campaign has failed. There is no bloodthirsty revenge evident. There is no proof of lawlessness. Silently marching on the Klan has made the best of this trying ordeal and has come out victorious. The attacks of the enemy are getting weaker and weaker and will soon react upon those who launch them in such a way as to gain the everlasting contempt of every true American citizen in these United States.

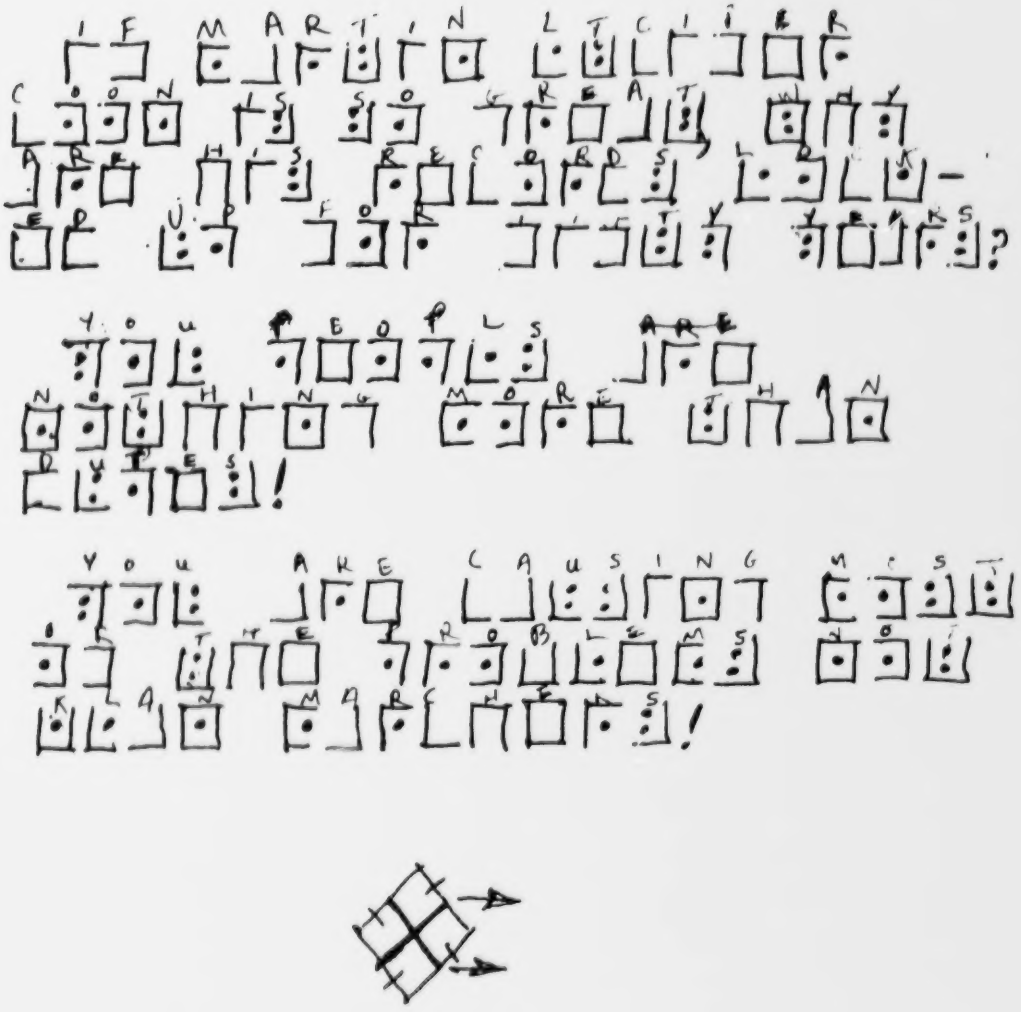
Those who have watched the battle through from the beginning know that it has been a hard fight. There were times when the enemy worked so ingeniously that their propaganda seemed to be tearing at the vitals of the Klan; but they were too eager in their mad crusade and "murder will out." They discarded caution and cunning and reverted to their natural method of battle. In the sight of victory, as they believed, they made a few grand-stand plays and all was over. All this time the Klan was silently building upon a solid foundation that would withstand for all time.

Then came the storming of the gates; the fusilade of lies and slander, the false accusations, the daring assaults, which, in their mad frenzy, included murder and other dastardly deeds which presented them to the public in their true light. And the public, which for a time, was duped, began to see the hidden hand of the enemy and a spirit of keen resentment was manifest.

The resources of the un-American influences have been exhausted. And they are compelled to exploit the editorials of pin-head editors in the columns of yellow newspapers in order to stay in the game a little longer.

The Klan has fought clean and will continue to do so. The enemy by its own acts has defeated itself and the time is short for it to endure. Public sentiment is rapidly growing in favor of the Klan and against the un-American influences which are opposing it. They cannot hope to accomplish much by the broadcasting of falsehood to an enlightened people. That field is no longer fertile for them. Instead of taking root and producing reinforcements for their ranks, it meets with keen resentment upon the part of the public and fastens the weight of suspicion more firmly upon those who dare instigate such baseless propaganda.

Appendix II



Translation provided by Amy Beardsly of the Unity Coalition

Appendix III

(This article is part of the Hoag Collection of newspaper clipping scrapbooks housed at the Washington County Pubic Library in Marietta. The clipping is undated, but Geraldine Muscari, the author, wrote for the Parkersburg News during the 1950's and 1960's.)

Sheltered Slaves Escaping from South

'Underground Railroad' Ran Through Washington County

by

Geraldine Muscari
Of the News Staff

One of 50 known agents on the Underground Railroad that ran through Washington County in pre-Civil War times, David Putnam, Jr., of Marietta, was among the most celebrated of the group of men who actively aided and sheltered escaping slaves entering Northern territory, often only a jump ahead of pursuit.

Because the very nature of their undertaking forbade the keeping of any sort of records or identification, we have but scattered scraps of information on the activities of the station agents and other "officials" of the subterranean system after 1850 when the Fugitive Slave Law became operative. Before that time many of the workers did keep some sort of tally, and among the Putnam paper was found a cryptic memorandum sent by Col. John Stone of Belpre, another tireless toiler of the Underground.

From it one learns that in the latter half of August, 1843, four parties of fugitives arrived on different dates at 2 a.m., and after staying until about 10 p.m., left for various locations identified only by initials, such as N, B, H and W. No indication is given of how many were in the different parties accommodated at a station of average activity at the time stated. Demands on the system increased steadily until just prior to the Civil War the entire Railroad was operating at full steam ahead.

Since night was the only time when the fugitives could move about in comparative invisibility, no one connected with the undertaking got overmuch sleep or rest, and there was always the need for constant vigilance.

Origin of the Name

Those who aided the fugitives were called conductors and the houses where the escapees lay concealed were known as stations on the Underground Railroad.

The term originated as the result of the escape of a slave from a Kentucky plantation and the close pursuit of his master. At the Ohio River, the latter had some trouble in obtaining a skiff but at last found one in time to leap inside and keep within sight of the slave as the black man swam the river and landed on the Ohio shore.

But by the time the owner reached the northern bank, the slave had disappeared, and the baffled possessor declared that his quarry "must have gone off on an underground railroad." This definition was thought so appropriate that it came spontaneously into general use.

David Putnam, Jr., a superintendent on the mythical yet functioning line, lived in Harmar, at that time a separate town, in a triple-porticoed frame house that was demolished in 1953 when Fort Harmar Drive swept around the western outskirt of the city of Marietta. Nearly every adult in the Pioneer City recalls the solid, comfortable-looking old home, last occupied by the Lydia Hale family.

Built in 1830-32, the 14-room residence stood at the head of Maple St., so called from the double row of maples on each side of the avenue leading to the Putnam front yard. The grounds extended to the back of the Harmar Congregational Church, and included two acres of land.

Fugitives Quarters

Here was an important junction on the Underground, and here fugitives brought from the Belpre or other area stations rested briefly before resuming their perilous journey northward. Although the redoubtable Putnam himself boasted that he put the slaves in the parlor chamber, it is more probable that they were quartered in a back bedroom, for it was her that little Hannah Putnam and a small friend, playing on a rainy day, opened a closet and found a runaway slave hiding there.

But the Putnam children had been warned of the secret nature of their father's activities and the great danger of discovery. Most of the time, indeed, the children remained unaware of any strangers in the house, and discovered their presence only occasionally and by accident. Now Hannah simply closed the door and the two little girls ran away.

Hannah was born in that house after a night of terror when a mob collected to storm the building and bring out a slave who had taken refuge there. Her grandson, Luther Penrose, now living in Marietta, heard the story from his grandmother many times in his youth.

A number of Wood county men patrolled the Putnam premises, working themselves up for action. Dr. Cotton, arriving to preside over the expected birth, sent down word that the mob must somehow be dispersed or Mrs. Putnam's life would be endangered. From town came Dr. John McCoy, Caleb Emerson, Col. Augustus Stone and Courtland Shepard, prominent citizens, to be on hand.

Dr. McCoy, an extremely tall man, whose dress that night was topped by a voluminous shoulder cape and a wide-brimmed hat, provided the solution. At 1 a.m. a tall man wrapped in the cape and with the hat pulled firmly down over his face, left the front door and sauntered down the front walk. No one investigated or challenged the pedestrian who strolled away into the night, and the following morning Mrs. Putnam, with her mind at ease, gave birth to a daughter.

Hannah, who lived until 1932, told her grandson that in 1930 only two houses used as Underground stations were still standing in Marietta, and identified the as her girlhood home and a frame residence on the corner of Putnam St. and the lane leading to College St.

Anchorage Never Involved

Although rumor persists that a Marietta landmark, The Anchorage, now occupied by Mrs. Sophia Russell, was a station, Penrose denies this strongly.

"Douglas Putnam, "Deacon Doug", as he was called, a brother of David Jr., built The Anchorage shortly before the Civil War and he and his wife moved into it in time for their Thanksgiving dinner in 1859. He built that house to please his wife after they came back from visiting a friend of hers in New Jersey who lived in a Ruscan villa, and she just had to have one, too. The house was built with stone cut from that quarry right back of the house, and the depression is still visible."

As for reported mysterious holes in the cellar of the imposing Anchorage, those, according to Penrose, are for drainage and nothing more. There is no truth, he states, in the legend that an underground passage led from The Anchorage cellar to the Muskingum River bank for the convenience of slaves taking the waterway to freedom. But such a romantic tale dies hard, and the atmosphere of mystery about the old stone house, aloof and withdrawn on its terraces and fenced about from intrusion, makes credence far easier than disbelief.

"There were never, never, never any Underground Railroad activities in The Anchorage," says the positive Penrose, "and no underground passage to the Muskingum."

Mob Watches House

History, however, repeated itself at the David Putnam home on Maple St., for The Marietta Intelligencer for February 11, 1847, reports:

"Two slaves, one of them belonging to J. Tumbleson, Esq., and one to G. Henderson, Esq., of Wood County, VA., escaped into Ohio on Saturday night last. It is alleged that they were concealed in the house of David Putnam, Jr., in Harmar, over Sunday."

At any rate, his house was watched and late in the evening of that day quite a number of men assembled around it, avowedly for the purpose of preventing their escape. A good deal of disturbance was made and it is also allege that threats of violence were uttered.

The alarm was given through Harmar that a mob had assembled at Putnam's house and had threatened to destroy it; that a large number of men were there from Wood County and more were coming; that they had sent to Parkersburg for help from there.

As might have been expected, a multitude soon collected and dispersed watchers in double quick time. Whether all who aided in keeping peace would have done so had they credited the report that the Negroes were really in Putnam's charge is questionable.

"We hear that some of them felt not a little vexed upon learning subsequently that during the hubbub the Negroes were dressed up in cloaks, marched through the crowd. furnished with horses and started post haste for Queen Victoria's dominions!"

Danger in Parkersburg

David Putnam Jr., found some harrowing experiences that Parkersburg was a good place for him to stay away from. (sic) On one occasion he and a friend, also suspected of abolitionist tendencies, were chased by a mob there to the wharfboat and then knocked into the river, from which they were rescued by the captain of the steamer upon which they had made the trip from Marietta.

The wrath of Beman Gates, at that time editor of The Intelligencer, know no bounds as he flayed the assailants in his columns and called upon the "responsible citizens of our neighboring city to use all due diligence to bring the perpetrators to justice. If Mr. Putnam has violated the law, let him be punished by law unless our statute book is to become a reproach and the name of liberty a byword."

Although only a few residents of Belpre were actively engaged in the Underground, the town itself was an important locality in the chain of stations, and many fugitives passed through or near it on their way north.

While the escape of the fugitives had to be as secret as possible, the slaves followed established routes such as roads along which lived other slaves who might help them, and numbers of runaways paralleled in their travels what is now U.S. 50, the road opened by the State of Virginia from Alexandria to the mouth of the Little Kanawha soon after the Ohio Company established its colony 13 miles up the Ohio River. This brought them to Belpre, the town across from their journey's end.

For some distance back into Virginia, slaves knew through their wonderfully efficient grapevine the names of their friends in Belpre and how they could be reached. They knew of the few people in Parkersburg who would help an escaping slave, and they knew that a free Negro woman named Jennie, living near the mouth of the Little Kanawha, would lend any assistance within her power.

Belpreans Sympathetic

While but a few Belpreans, glorying in the name of abolitionists, were actively engaged in the work of the Underground Railroad, almost all the town's residents were sympathetic with the undertaking. Of the estimated 600 fugitive slaves passing through Washington County in the 10 years preceding the Civil War, the vast majority went by way of Belpre of Belpre Twp.

And in Belpre Twp. took place one summer night in 1845 the dramatic capture of escaping Wood County slaves and abetting Decatur Twp. men by pursuing Virginians that barely missed setting off a border war between the two powerful neighbor states of Ohio and Virginia.

An intinerant Baptist preacher names Romaine, conducting six slaves on the first lap of their escape from the Harwood plantation at Washington Bottom, Va., managed to avoid capture by a party of 16 armed men from Parkersburg who were ambushed on the Ohio shore along the narrows just above the mouth of the Little Hocking, but all except one of the slaves were apprehended and taken back to Virginia along with three Decatur Twp. white men, Peter Garner, Creighton Loraine and Mordecai Thomas. Two Quakers, Titus Shotwell and Burden Stanton, along with Romaine, managed to escape their would-be abductors, but the other three were taken to Parkersburg and lodged in jail for six months while North and South roared over their final disposition. In the end, the case died quietly in the Virginia Supreme Court with the question of jurisdiction never resolved, and the men were as quietly released.

Proximity to slave territory made Belpre a somewhat hazardous place for free Negroes to live under the risk of being kidnaped by unscrupulous slave traders and sold in the South, and only four Negroes lived in Belpre in 1860.

But living in different parts of Belpre were agents of the Underground, among them Col. John Stone, Jonathan Stone, Perley Howe, Daniel Goss, Joseph Smith, T.B. Hibbard and a few others. With these men and their families, the hunted and harried refugee was sure of finding shelter and assistance.

Concealed in Cornfield

For years fugitives came and went in a cornfield on the Stone farm, and John M. Stone recalled seeing as a boy a colored family with a number of young children hidden in this field by a little pond. The children were somehow kept so silent during the daytime that no one knew of the family's presence. During the night a conductor from Barlow came and moved the human freight to another station a bit farther North.

Slaves soon learned the position of the North Star that pointed the way to Canada and freedom, although they had to stay in hiding for days on end until their temporary guardians believed it safe to send them along.

A conductor would take his charges to a certain place and utter a certain signal, such as the bark of a fox or the hoot of an owl, and when the answering bark or hoot was heard, would tell the fugitives to remain where they were until a friend came to help him.

Various calls and signals were employed. Col. John Stone and David Putnam, Jr., used the tremolo cry of an owl, and Gen. Rufus R. Daws, later to win laurels for bravery in the Union Army, in his later life recalled being awakened by the sound of a hoot-owl one night while visiting his grandfather, Judge Ephraim Cutler, at constitution, a few miles below Marietta.

An answering cry came from the opposite Virginia shore, and a boat left the Cutler riverbank. Little Rufus' mother, slipping out of bed, knelt to pray until the boat returned silently, crowded with human freight.

A code system of raps and knocks on windows and doors was popular, and to the householder's startled query of "Who's there?" the reply would be "A friend with friends." Or if a fugitive were left to wait alone while his conductor went back from the place of rendezvous, he knew that it was a technical way of the latter's making sure he could say quite truthfully that he had neither seen nor spoken to anyone, and thus not lay himself open to prosecution.

Symbolic Terms

Often symbolic terms were used for the passengers of the Railroad, such as "U.G. Baggage," "two volumes of 'The Irrepressible Conflict' bound in black," "Wood to be sent to market," and the like.

When one friend took over the care of a party of escapees from another, he would move them on to the next station, a little closer to Canada, returning home that same night so that no one except his family knew of his absence.

END

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